



# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

*First Church News*

**January 2012**

**Worship and  
Religious  
Education  
for Children  
and Youth**

**Two services on  
Sunday mornings:  
9.30 and 11:30**



**Email:**  
[church@firstuu.org](mailto:church@firstuu.org)

**Website:**  
[www.firstuu.org](http://www.firstuu.org)

**5200 Fannin Street  
Houston, TX 77004  
(713) 526-5200**



## Death and Rebirth

In the religion of ancient Babylon, the god Tammuz dies and is reborn. This happens every year with the beginning of the summer solstice.

The Egyptian sacred firebird, the phoenix, lives for 500 to 1,000 years then burns to ashes and is reborn.

Quetzalcoatl is the Aztec feathered serpent god of death and resurrection. In Greek mythology, Persephone is abducted to hell but returns to the living, much on the time scale as Tammuz.

Then, of course, there is Jesus. There are many stories of the dying god who somehow manages to come back..

Deep in the human psyche is the scary knowledge of death and the possibility of rebirth. We know everything living must one day die. And we know that it is from mystery that we come and to mystery that we return.

But in the meantime there are deaths and rebirths on a smaller, if no less important scale – the death of the bachelor and the birth of the married man. The death of the employee and the birth of the retiree. The death of the person pretending to be who they are not, and the birth of authentic individuality.

This month we will look at endings and beginnings and the cycle of life.

So much has died and is being reborn. So much is in flux!

Our new model of children’s religious education– workshop rotation– is fully implemented. Natalie Browne and I are rolling out a new way of doing UU faith formation for adults– growth groups. You can read more about this in her column for this month. You will hear much more about this in January, and the groups kick off in February.

***Everything Ends.  
But there are always  
New Beginnings.***

We are continuing to tweak a new model of doing short term social justice projects, and our Steering Committee is

undertaking a Social Justice Fair where representatives from community organizations will come to our church to talk about providing opportunities for us to get involved. We are also planning the structure on deciding on a Signature Social Justice Project defined as a 3 year minimum commitment, locally based, that will get us better known in Houston.

Your board and I are planning for the care, growth, and maturation of our Endowment Fund. Our 2nd service music program planning continues apace.

Other UU groups in Houston are seeking our guidance and counsel – about leadership development and about tapping our wisdom.

There’s a lot going on, and I look forward to sharing it with you!

## SERMON TOPICS FOR JANUARY

### **January 1 - Letters Home From Camp**

**Jason Cook, Student Guest Preacher**

By sharing real-life experiences working with youth, Jason Cook shares his thoughts on what it means for us as a congregation to practice our principles when it comes to creating a community that includes everyone, regardless of age. Through both humorous and poignant stories, Jason explores how we can all practice the ministry of presence with each other.

### **January 8 - Circle of Life**

**Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell**

As the Wheel of Life turns again and midwinter must eventually yield to spring, we dedicate our children; name new births; new marriages; we honor anniversaries, and recall the departed. Please contact the office if you would like your children dedicated in the church today, and provide us with names, ages, and which service you attend. Service led by the ministers. We begin our theme of the month with "Death & Rebirth."

### **January 15 - Don't Fall Asleep: Dr. King's Message for Unitarian Universalists**

**Rev. Russell "Andy" Burnett**

In 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the Ware Lecture at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly. His words are as relevant today as they were nearly five decades ago. On this day before Martin Luther King Day, we'll bring some of Dr. King's advice for UUs into the 21st century.

### **January 22 - If We Don't Build It, How Can They Come?**

**Rev. Jim Eller, Guest Preacher from the UUSC**

This sermon will highlight the ways that the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is advancing human rights throughout the world.

### **January 29 - The Apocalypse**

**Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell**

Since before Jesus, various prophets have called for the end of the world. More recently, some scientists have done the same. Yet, we are still here. Why have so many predicted the end of the world, and why is there no consequences for them when they are wrong?

## NOTES FROM THE JOURNEY

Rev. Adam Robinson, Assistant Minister

So it's Wednesday at 2:15 p.m. Tom needs this newsletter article by Friday but why, why, why won't anything come? It should. I really should be overflowing with ideas about death and rebirth having experienced so much of that stuff last week.

There was the death of our dearly beloved church member, and my friend, Luther Brown followed shortly by the passing of Velda Hunter's father, Walter, where I was privileged to touch magic while I talked him across the barrier between life and death.

And then there was whatever transformation or rebirth that happened at the Christmas Music service when my heart opened. My heart opened to you, and opened to the love I experience from the congregation, and it began to flow back and forth. Surely that is a birth of some kind.

WHY CAN'T I FIGURE OUT WHAT I SHOULD WRITE?!?!?

Oh wait! We are still in advent on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. We are in anticipation of the coming grace, love, joy, and peace. But for now we are heavy and burdened and feel like between the discomfort and the excitement of being so pregnant with the redemptive possibilities those things will bring upon us, we will literally tear apart from the inside out.

Thoughts, emotions, dreams and reality are all still swirling like some amniotic sludge clogging my spiritual ears, nose and throat making it impossible for any of those things I know I will one day be shouted out with the exhilaration that I know will be there.

Soon, though, I will hear the silence pierced with the joyous wailing of a newly delivered life. And then, my friends, this advent of my soul will be over and anything will be possible.

Peace and light, Rev. Adam

**SPANNING THE AGES**

From Natalie Browne, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Recently we have been encouraging our children to wear their nametags by giving them a “thank you” trinket each week that they wear theirs. One of our Kindergarteners came up to me in Channing Hall, and informed me in tears that his “thank you” had broken when someone stepped on it. I reassured him that he could have another one and asked him if it was okay that I eat my lunch first. He solemnly shook his head indicating that he could not wait. Since I was very hungry, I responded by offering him two “thank you” trinkets if he would wait while I ate. There was a moment of hesitation and then his face broke into an enormous smile. And mine did too – we both were alive and all was well with the world.

How often in our lives do we go through this experience of disappointment and loss turning to sunlight and joy? It happens again and again. Seldom, however, do we attach the word rebirth or resurrection to the experience. And yet, what else is it? For our Kindergartener, his joy died as his

little toy broke. My reassurance of a new toy offered a new beginning and the chance at two if he could practice patience. It was truly a resurrection.

Often we are not able to bring about that new beginning so easily. We Unitarian Universalists, however, know that our time is now and that the new beginning does not necessarily lie in the beyond. Thus, we also recognize that we are participants in either waiting for rebirth, knowing that new beginnings do indeed come, or in engaging in what we believe is likely to bring resurrection: change in living conditions for someone on the street by donating to SEARCH, purchasing a toy for the Women’s Center Christmas Store, dedicating our lives to teaching, to nursing or research.

May the new year be full of moments where each of us learns greater patience and understanding of the inevitable deaths in our lives and recognizes rebirths, resurrections and new beginnings as they happen, for happen they will.

**Luther Brown**, a long time member of First Church, the sanctuary choir, a pioneer in music education and an accomplished cellist, died on December 6 after a long illness. A memorial service was held for him on December 10, and this year’s music service with beautiful music and wonderful performers that Luther would have loved, was dedicated to his memory.

Wheel  
of Life



**Mary Walker**, mother of **Cindi Walker**, recently died in Paris, Tennessee at the age of 88. Our sympathy is extended to Cindi, her husband Michael Morrison and daughter Alyssa.

Our condolences also go out to **Velda Hunter** for the recent loss of her father, **Walter Grant Hunter, Sr.**, at the age of 91. Rev. Adam Robinson participated in a service for him on December 15.

**Elizabeth Asnes** attended GA in 2006. Out of this experience she wrote an article recounting her personal experiences in a life affirming covenant group. We are proud to share that the article will be published in the March, 2012 issue of *SGM Quarterly*.



**Saint Valentine's Concert and Dance  
featuring  
The Texas Southern University  
Jazz Experience Big Band**

**Saturday, February 11, 6:00 p.m.**

In a repeat engagement following last year's highly successful and enjoyable event, the **TSU Jazz Experience Big Band** will be featured in our annual Valentine's Concert. Our own Jason Oby will be featured in performances of some of the most memorable love songs as recorded by Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett and the Duke Ellington Orchestra to name but a few. The band is led by Horace Alexander Young who has enjoyed a distinguished performing career throughout the United States and abroad as a woodwind artist and composer/arranger. Mr. Young has a long-standing affiliation with First Church dating back to 1972 when he played the first jazz service held in our sanctuary.

**Audience members will be encouraged to dance and enjoy a relaxed evening  
with a wide variety of music evocative of the spirit of love.**

**Desserts and champagne will be served.**

Advance tickets may be purchased for \$25.00 in Channing Hall on Sundays,  
in the church office during the week, or on the church web site at [www.firstuu.org](http://www.firstuu.org).



## Growth Groups Coming in February

Have you been looking for a group to belong to here at church? Do you wish you could talk about the sermon and its impact on what you are living day to day? Do you want to learn more about Unitarian Universalism?

Two or three growth groups will start up in February aimed at just this. Based on a small group ministry model, participants will meet 10 weeks (you get to stop—no questions asked—during the first three) in groups of 8-10 people. This will provide you with a place to discuss and be with First Church members and friends, and allow the Adult Programs Team to test the model before rolling it out in the fall.

Each group will have two leaders: a trained facilitator and a host. They will determine whether their group will meet at the church or in someone's home. They will also choose the time of the weekly gathering. There will be open-ended questions provided based on the previous Sunday's sermon and on a handout of related materials.

Sign-up sheets are available in Channing Hall and you can also call the office to register, 713-526-5200.



## *New U Class*

*Saturday, February 4*

*9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m*

*Fireside Room*

Primarily a pathway to membership, but everyone is welcome. We will explore how your spiritual journey led you to us and how UUs talk about religion. You'll have a short tour of the building and find out the way things run here at First Church. During the class you'll have the opportunity to meet several church leaders and staff. We'll do our best to answer your questions. The day includes a complimentary lunch, giving everybody an opportunity to get better acquainted. Please sign up at the Information Table in Channing Hall or call the office at 713-526-5200.

## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS FOR ADULTS AND YOUTH

Welcome to Lifespan Faith Development at First Church where we provide tools to help us grow spiritually, build stronger families, improve relationships and make the world a better place. The programs listed are sponsored by the Adult Programs Team, [APT@firstuu.org](mailto:APT@firstuu.org), unless noted otherwise.



### FINDING YOUR WAY AT FIRST CHURCH (for our guests)

**Sundays, immediately after each service**

For an informal conversation after the service, go to the Welcome Table in Channing Hall for an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and impressions while you enjoy a cup of coffee or a meal. **Sponsored by the Welcome Team.**

**JANUARY 2012**

**Visitors are welcome at all events.**

**Check the day's event listing at church for room assignments.**



### EXPLORING MINDFULNESS with Guided Meditations and Recorded Talks

**Sundays, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.**

We listen to one or two guided meditations and recorded talks by well known meditation teachers including Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, and Jon Kabat-Zinn. The guided meditations and talks last from about five to twenty minutes each, and the focus each week is on some aspect of mindfulness. We get to know each other by briefly sharing some of our meditation and life experiences. **Facilitators: Church members Pam Perry and Ginger Clarkson assisted by other church friends.**

**ON-GOING**

**Sundays**



**EARLY MORNING BOOK GROUP, 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**

Our next book is *A Dialogue of Civilizations*, subtitled *Gulen's Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse*, by Dr. B. Jill Carroll, a Rice University professor. [Click here](#) for a listing of current and future books or contact **Dick Hanneman, First Church Member**, at [BookGroupCoordinator@firstuu.org](mailto:BookGroupCoordinator@firstuu.org)

**CHANGING WOMEN, 9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.**

A women's wisdom circle and Native American spirituality discussion group. Please join us for some sacred time. **Contact: Keddy Outlaw, First Church Member, [ChangingWomen@firstuu.org](mailto:ChangingWomen@firstuu.org).**

**MEN'S GROUP, 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.**

Conversation for guys - one of the best things going for long-term mental health. New participants welcome! **Contact: Peter Durkin, First Church Member, [MensGroup@firstuu.org](mailto:MensGroup@firstuu.org).**



### **SUNDAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE, 11:30 a.m.**

We have a good time educating ourselves and getting to know each other by discussing a wide variety of topics with the help of facilitators and group guidelines

**Jan. 1: NOTE:** We start at 11:45 am today, due to the one church service from 10:30 to 11:30.

Topic: What are your thoughts on building your future in the present, and leaving your past in the past, on this New Year's Day? Facilitator: Steve Braun

**Jan. 8:** Informed by our UU values, what should be the ultimate purpose of our economic system?

Facilitator: Eric Botts

**Jan. 15:** What are creative ways to bring about change? The discussion will deal with nonviolence and social responsibility and the philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Facilitator: Greg Rea

**Jan. 22:** In connection with our first UU Principle: How might we use mindfulness and compassion to affirm our inherent worth and dignity and make the world a better place? Facilitator: Pam Perry

**Jan. 29:** "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those others that have been tried from time to time." Do you agree or disagree with this quote from Winston Churchill?

Facilitator: James Wooten



### **PARENTS GROUP, Sunday, January 22, 11:00 - 12:30**

Looking for thoughtful parents who share your values and concerns? Now would be a good time to join us. Infants are welcome in our group. Child care is provided in the nursery for older children. **Contact Sue Steinhardt at [ParentsGroupCoordinator@firstuu.org](mailto:ParentsGroupCoordinator@firstuu.org)**

### **Tuesdays**



**TAI CHI, 6:15 p.m.** - Beginners are encouraged to arrive at 5:30 for personalized instruction. Facilitator: **Dale Englefield**, Church friend, studied under Tai Chi Master Edward C.C. Shen and Yang Style World Champion Don Buttermore. Dale teaches the traditional Yang Style short form with martial arts references.



### **GREAT IDEAS GROUP, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

The Great Ideas Group studies the great thinkers, great writers, great religions, and great ideas of the past and present. Current discussions focus on law enforcement ethics and future subjects will include economics and equality. Meeting on the **second and fourth Tuesdays** of each month at 7:00 p.m., newcomers are always welcome.

**Facilitator: Dan Robb, First Church Member** - Contact Dan, [GreatIdeas@firstuu.org](mailto:GreatIdeas@firstuu.org).

### **Fridays**



### **POETRY GROUP, 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon**

"The best words in the best order." This group reads poetry and seeks the rewards that great literature can provide. **Facilitator: Lucrecia Cox, [Poetry@firstuu.org](mailto:Poetry@firstuu.org)**.

### **Saturdays**

### **TAI CHI, 10:30**

This class is similar to the traditional Chinese method of teaching: process-oriented and learn-by-example. After warm-ups, we will do the form very slowly and in silence. After we have finished there will be time for students to ask questions. **Facilitator: Dale Englefield**, Contact Dale, [TaiChi@firstuu.org](mailto:TaiChi@firstuu.org).

## SPECIAL ADULT PROGRAMMING BEGINNING IN JANUARY

### Monday Meditation Time

**Mondays, January 9 and following, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

These weekly meditation classes are appropriate for both beginners and experienced meditators. Each class includes a short session of gentle Qigong movements to relax and loosen up the body, basic instructions for following the breath as a focus in Vipassana (Insight) meditation, and a period of silent meditation followed by questions about challenges in the practice. The class will end with either a talk, or a discussion of a short reading relating Buddhist philosophy to daily life. **Facilitator: Ginger Clarkson, Trained Community Dharma Leader**

### Owning Your Religious Past

**Sundays, Jan. 15, 22, 29 and Feb. 5, 12 11:00-12:30**

Are you a “born again” UU? The majority of Unitarian Universalists come into the denomination from other religions; often there have been several stops along the path into our congregations. *Owning Your Religious Past* provides an opportunity to reckon with our religious upbringings and integrate them into our current religious lives. The 5 workshops provide insight, understanding, and some simple yet powerful tools through which we may re-examine and retrieve positive aspects of past religious connections. The workshops address the affective elements of these connections, rather than dogma. The workshop is designed to provide both group sharing and private exploration, using journal writing exercises. **Co-facilitators: Steve Braun, Kamal Maheshwari, and Pam Perry**

### Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Hospice But Were Afraid To Ask

**Saturday, January 21, 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon**

In part two of the series on Living and Dying Well, the focus will be on Hospice. The facilitators will explain what hospice is, the services normally provided, the financial aspects of hospice care, and common problems families face with hospice services. Small group sharing circles will be held after the educational part of the presentation. Paul is a registered nurse with nine years of hospice experience. Beryl is a licensed psychotherapist specializing in grief and loss. Please register for this workshop by signing up at church or by emailing [pamperry@hal-pc.org](mailto:pamperry@hal-pc.org). The registration list will be on the Information Table. **Facilitators: Paul Hornick, (registered nurse) and Beryl Kaminsky, (psychotherapist)**

### Apocalypticism

**Wednesday, January 25, 7:00 p.m.**

My minister’s study group (Prairie Group) asked me to write a paper on the “contemporary aesthetics of apocalyptic thinking.” Not only that, but they asked me to use audio, video, and graphics to better illustrate the concepts I would try and communicate. So, this year, I presented my “paper” to my 40+ colleagues.

It is from that experience that I thought it would be interesting to make the same presentation at First Church, but with some additional reflections. We will watch a 30 minute video, and then have a guided discussion after that.

In this presentation I examine Evangelical Christianity’s prediction of the “end times;” and compare that to more recent prophetic warnings of an impending ecological collapse. Both schools prompt a similar aesthetic and share a lot in common. **Presenter: Rev. Dr. Daniel O’Connell**

NEWS FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As I write this letter, the Board has not yet had it's December meeting. I originally thought that this would mean that we do not have much to report. Sure, we are continuing to refine the dashboard of healthy indicators for the church, plan for future events, and interpret our ends statements. Yes, the Leadership Development team is gathering nominations to fill next year's board and we are planning training so that they can start their 3-year board terms without a lot of catch up. And my goodness! We have moved the Annual Board meeting to the Sunday before Labor Day (May 20, 2012) so that we can hold our yearly retreat in June. Other than that...

I will take this opportunity to share a quote that we used at our Board Retreat from Grant Bright, a retired Project Leader with IBM - USA, Leadership and Management Development. The quote says:

"Leadership has to do with direction. Management has to do with the speed, coordination and logistics in going in that direction.

The **WORKERS** are chopping their way through the jungle.

The **MANAGERS** are coordinating, making sure the tools are sharp, etc.

The **LEADERS** climb a tree and shout "Wrong jungle!!"

If we are doing our job of the board correctly, we are up here in the trees making sure that we are in the right place and on the right path. So far, so good.

From the jungle to you - Happy Holidays!

Lucy Anderson, President, BOT



Top, left to right: Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell, Sr. Minister; Ron Cookston (2012); Evan Michaelides, Treasurer; Steve Braun (2012); Lucy Anderson, President (2013); Peter Durkin (2012). Seated, left to right: Wendy Van Syckle (2013); Sheila Whitford (2013); Lydia Luz, Vice-President (2012); Rita Saylor (2013) and Connie Acosta (2014).



From Your Leadership Development Team

During December the LDT asked First Church members to nominate candidates for election to the Board to fill four vacant slots. The deadline for nominations for the Board is Sunday, January 8th, 2012. The LDT will then conduct interviews with each nominee and report back to the congregation with biographies and information about everyone on the slate. Then, in mid-to-late February, the candidates will begin a Leadership Orientation program newly drafted by the Board. This orientation program will prepare candidates to serve on the Board and in other leadership positions for First Church. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, or if you have any questions about nominating someone for the Board, contact any of the Leadership Development Team: Jon Naylor, team leader, Connie Acosta, Linda Richardson, Cindi Walker, and Peter Durkin.

### Excerpts from the Treasure's Report

November was a very good month for us financially. The anticipated upswing in pledge income materialized this month, with the result that pledge income for the month was \$10,000 more than budgeted. This brings us right about where we had planned to be year-to-date with respect to pledge income. Another happy event on the income side - this one a surprise - was a \$5,000 gift, that was donor-designated for the reserve fund. The process of rebuilding our depleted reserve fund has begun! With the year less than half over, the gifts that have come in so far have already exceeded what we had budgeted for the full year.

Our cash position has improved markedly this month; cash minus short-term liabilities increased by about \$22,000. In fact, for the first time in quite a while, certainly since I've been Treasurer, our cash on hand is positive even after backing out short-term liabilities (i.e., funds we're holding for various groups, as well as taxes we owe) and prorated prepaid pledges (see third chart). Not by a lot, but I'll take it. It is really starting to look like our finances are headed in the right direction.

How is it that our cash position improved so much in one month? Well, November is typically a pretty good month for us, primarily because of the Services Auction. Our budget for November called for \$62,000 in income against only \$50,000 in expenses, for a projected surplus of \$12,000. We were fortunate enough to beat even that positive projection by about \$10,000. So the result was that our cash position improved quite considerably.

Expenses came in about \$5,000 higher than budgeted this month. About \$2,000 of this is illusory; these are funds spent by the Social Justice team which they raised on their own, and is thus offset by an identical amount of income (which we're tracking in a new sub-account of "Special Fundraising"). So that doesn't represent any net cost to the church. The other \$3,000 is related to facilities - maintenance and repair costs, and a higher-than-budgeted electric bill. Although this is the second month in a row that the electric bill exceeded budget by about \$1,000, it turns out this is attributable to the way this billing lags; the payment we made in November is for our August usage, which of course was heavy. So this seems likely to balance out later in the year.

On another positive note, the balance on our UUA building loan is now down to \$10,000. Another six months and it will be paid off. That will eliminate about \$20,000 in annual expenses, providing an opportunity to further rebuild our reserves

### Social Justice Team

**Have Fun - Do Good**

**Saturday, January 28**

**10:00 a.m. - Noon**

On Saturday, January 28, the congregation will have a chance to chose social justice activities that will engage the church for the beginning of 2012. More than a dozen community groups will be present at the church to propose projects that improve our community and can use our volunteer help. The projects will focus on a variety of concerns: youth, the environment, the Third Ward, women, health, GLBT issues and education, among others.

This social justice fair, and the proposed activities, are designed to appeal to all our members, friends and supporters. And this really is a "fair" the truest sense. We will have activities to entertain our children while their parents explore the many ways First Church can help improve the quality of life in Houston. And, of course, since this is a First Church event, we'll have food. We hope to see you at the Social Justice Fair.

### **The Healthy Congregation Team**

To clarify our role, the Healthy Congregation Team has constructed the following purpose:

At First UU we expect differences of opinion but seek to avoid dissension. In the church, disagreement or conflict between members and the ministers or staff (or between members of groups and group leaders), can be especially damaging. This team seeks to foster constructive dialogue between members and leaders and to help head off conflicts before they become serious.

To prevent disagreements from festering we often simply provide information about governance structure and procedure - letting people know, for example, whom to talk to about this or that concern. We also try to keep the staff and ministers informed about congregational concerns.

When major issues arise and decisions need to be made we help organize and facilitate "town hall meetings" where people can air their opinions and gain information about the issues. Our aim on these occasions is to ensure that everyone is mindful of our behavioral covenant and that the process is constructive.

The Healthy Congregation Team has a listening table in Channing Hall on Sundays from 10:30 a.m. until 11:20 a.m. We can also be reached through our e-mail address at [hct@firstuu.org](mailto:hct@firstuu.org). The team has added Michael O'Laughlin as a new member and our other members include Lindley Doran, Trish Kolodney, Bill Nelson, and Sheila Whitford.

### **Notes from the Stewardship Team**

Canvass 2012 - 13 theme is "It's Just the Beginning" Graphics for canvass materials have been designed by Donna Durbin. Working on some issues with the reproduction quality of the art work onto "save-the date" mailing materials.

Planning Leading Donor Dinner and Cocktail party for Saturday, 25th February. Plan to invite between 75 and 90 people representing roughly the top quartile of givers. Currently the preferred venue is at Lifeline Chaplaincy (near First UU) due to difficulty of getting space at a restaurant. Team members are considering catering options. Jason is helping to provide music options. Budget for the event is \$3000; however, there was discussion within the team to spend closer to \$2000 in an effort to give back to the community.

Drafting "save the date" post cards for sending per the leading donor dinner in mid-January. Other designs for pledge cards, etc. are scheduled for completion in mid-January.

We will be recruiting canvassers in January with an attempt to get around 30 people to help canvass the top 1/2 of pledgers from last year. The plan is to have each person responsible for canvassing 4 -5 people with face-to-face visits. More details are required in the team for planning the canvass. Also the team needs to brainstorm at the next meeting in January a replacement for the challenge grant campaign from last year. Ideas raised have to do mostly with campaigning for separate funds for specific capital improvement projects at the church.

The team will start meeting weekly in January.

**First Unitarian Universalist Church**  
5200 Fannin Street  
Houston, TX 77004-5808

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### **GO GREEN**

The newsletter is available online. We email a link to the newsletter each month and to the *Blast* each week. If you do not need a copy mailed to you, please let us know, [peggy@firstuu.org](mailto:peggy@firstuu.org).

# **First Church News**



***A Community of Love Beyond Belief:  
Transforming Ourselves, Houston and the World.***

**Church Office Hours:  
Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell, Senior Minister  
Rev. Adam Robinson, Assistant Minister  
Rev. Robert L. Schaibly, Minister Emeritus

Natalie Browne, Director of Lifespan Faith Development  
Jason Oby, Music Director  
Bob Fazakerly, Organist

Peggy Harvey, Director of Administration  
Tom Cowen, Facilities Manager  
Jessica Pierce, Nursery Coordinator  
Tom Pile, AV Technician  
Hilman Laws, Weekday Custodian  
Dale Englefield, Weekend Custodian

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**President**  
Lucy Anderson (2013)

**Vice President**  
Lydia Luz (2012)

**Trustees**  
Connie Acosta (2014)  
Steve Braun (2012)  
Ron Cookston (2012)  
Peter Durkin (2012)  
Rita Saylor (2013)  
Wendy Van Syckle (2013)  
Sheila Whitford (2013)

**Treasurer**  
Evan Michaelides

**Parish Clerk**  
Rosita Kirkman